DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION "POINT OF CONTACT"
AUGUST 2007 NEWSLETTER

THIS WAS A VERY SPECIAL SDSTA MEETING

The annual Summer SDSTA meeting was held in Huron on July 13, 2007 and what a memorable day it was. The SDSTA presented its South Dakota School Bus Driver of the Year Award to its 2007 winners. Ironically, not only did these two people receive a School Bus Driver of the Year Award and both have 40 years of service; it was realized at the presentation ceremony that they had both attended the same high school at the same time.

This day of fate all started with the names that had been presented to the SDSTA for School Bus Driver of the Year. After going through the nominations, there were two names that stuck out the most. Both people had an excellent driving history, had an excellent rapport with the districts they drove for and both had driven school bus for forty years.

Now came the task of deciding which one of the two should be chosen for School Bus Driver of the Year. The committee was having difficulties picking one name so they called the SDSTA board members to ask what they should do. It was decided that even though the award was intended for *one* driver each year that this year needed to be an exception. The two applicants were just too equal.

First Clyde Dillman gets up to receive his award; Clyde has driven bus in Huron for all of the forty years he has driven. After receiving his award he thanks the association for the honor and takes his seat. Next, Carolyn Bill was called up to receive her award (she did not know she was receiving this award until her name was called). Carolyn had driven bus in Hot Springs for three years and the remaining thirty-seven years in the Brandon Valley School District. After Carolyn received her award, she thanked the group for the honor and then said, "I think I went to high school with that gentleman when I lived in Huron" (she was talking about Clyde). What are the odds these two would meet again years later to receive the same award? It was truly a special day for everyone who attended the meeting.

SCHOOL BUS DRIVER TRAINING

Over fifty Train the Trainers attended the training sessions in Sioux Falls, Pierre and Douglas this last month.

If you need your drivers trained, plan to attend one of the places listed on the State's web site.
http://doe.sd.gov/oatq/transportation/index.asp

Your Safety Score

Checking your personal financial credit report and FICO score is advertised frequently as something we all should do regularly to minimize erroneous information and know where we stand when we apply for a loan. Similarly, checking you company's "Safety Score" is recommended by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). The ratings and information on the score cards can not only influence the likelihood of an audit but also the frequency of further vehicle inspections at roadside inspection checkpoints. A federal program known as "Moving Kids Safely" is educating school districts, camp groups, and others who might hire school busses on how to evaluate bus transportation operations. This includes reviewing safety scores. Insurers and others are checking this available information to judge your company's safety effectiveness. There are 3 different safety-rating systems. Unlike the credit bureaus, each of the safety rating systems differs in its information. The first safety score is known as "Safety & Fitness Electronic Records System" AKA "SAFER System" (www.safersys.org). This system is free to the public and provides a brief snap shot of each company's general information, accident statistics, vehicle and driver out of service record, and safety rating. This system is operated by the FMCSA. The Motor Carrier Management Information System (MCMIS) is operated by the Department of

Transportation (DOT). This system contains information on the safety fitness of commercial motor carriers subject to the Federal Motor Carriers Safety Regulations (FMCSR). This information is also available to the public but at a fee of around $27.50 per report. While the DOT is in charge of this system, the information is disseminated via a contractor known as Computing Technologies, Inc. (CoTs). This system offers safety profiles along with other crash and census reports regarding the company. More information is available on this system at www.fmcsa.dot.gov/factsfigs/mcmis/mcmiscatalog.htm. The last safety system to check is the "Motor Carrier Status Management System" (SafeStat). This FMCSA system combines current and historical company based safety performance (crashes, roadside inspections, on-site compliance review and enforcement histories) and allows a relative peer check of a company's safety fitness. The FMCSA is using this information to focus enforcement resources on companies with the greatest potential safety risk. This information is available free via http://ai.volpe.dot.gov/SafeStat/SafeStatMain.asp. It is noted that there has been a temporary removal of Accident Safety Evaluation Area (SEA) and overall SafeStat Score from this site due to information gathering issues with the State partners. You can still access the overall SafeStat Score. It is suggested you check your safety score on these systems to verify correctness of information and see where you stand from a safety standpoint.

The information in this newsletter is distributed for information purposes only. It does not represent legal advice.